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ABSTRACT

With the move toward democracy in many countries and the changes of globalization, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play a greater role in providing social services. Organizations such as UNICEF, USAID, and the World Bank recognize the important role that NGOs could play in education development projects, particularly in the effort to achieve universal education and improved educational quality. This paper examines the role of NGOs and the partnerships they forge to improve the delivery of educational services. The paper focuses on partnerships between international or national NGOs and local communities. It presents a framework of tensions that may exist in NGO partnership projects. This framework relies on a synthesis of relevant literature on NGO partnerships and educational partnership projects, and the author's experience in working with a partnership project in rural Pakistan. The paper considers some implications for effective educational partnerships. Contains 5 notes and 26 references. (BT)

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NGO partnerships in education: A framework of opportunities and obstacles

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Introduction

There is little doubt that in the past two decades, with the move towards democracy in many countries and the changes of globalization, that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are playing a greater role in providing social services (UN Commission on Global Governance, 1995). While the literature suggests there are more NGOs involved in development projects, it is difficult to ascertain the actual number of NGOs and their total amount of expenditures, as varying and incomplete data exist. Available data from the OECD countries shows a growth in the number of NGOs from 1600 in 1980 to 2970 in 1993, with total expenditures during this same period increasing from US$2.8 billion to US$5.7 billion (OECD in Chen, 1997). The growth in the number of national and local NGOs in developing countries[1] is even much higher (Edwards and Hulme, 1992). Fernando and Heston (1997) report that in recent years about 10 percent of public development aid is channeled through NGOs, and this amount is growing. The actual expenditures of NGOs on education projects are unknown. Nevertheless, organizations such as UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank all recognize the important role that NGOs could play in education development projects, particularly in the effort to achieve universal education and improved educational quality of schools (Gibbs, Fumo, & Kuby, 1999; UNICEF, 1999).

This paper examines the role of NGOs and the partnerships they forge in their efforts to improve the delivery of educational services. There are many forms of NGO partnerships involved in the improvement of education; such partnerships may be between NGOs and international funding agencies, NGOs and governments, NGOs and communities or parents, or a combination thereof. This paper particularly focuses on partnerships established between international or national NGOs and local communities.

In the remainder of this section, I provide a definition of NGOs, differentiating those that operate at international, national and local levels. Additionally, I also consider the meaning of participation and involvement as they relate to partnerships, an essential element in these NGO educational projects. In the second section of this paper, I present a framework of tensions that may exist in NGO partnership projects. This framework relies on a synthesis of relevant literature of NGO partnerships and educational partnership projects; furthermore, my experience in working with a partnership project in Pakistan, the Improving Pre-primary and Primary Education in rural Sindh, also informs the development of this framework. Finally, in the third section, I will consider some implications for effective educational partnerships, and suggest how they can be improved so that NGOs and communities can be successful in providing access to and improving the quality of education.

Definitions

In order to delineate the limits of the discussion of this paper, it is important to provide some definitions of the key concepts used here. First, characteristics of NGOs are considered and then NGOs are differentiated in terms of level and form, providing distinctions between international NGOs, national NGOs and local NGOs, or community-based organizations (CBO). As the focus of this paper is primarily on partnerships with communities, differing interpretations of community-based schools are also discussed. Finally, the notion of partnerships is defined.

Gordenker and Weiss (1996) suggest the following defining characteristics of NGOs as opposed to other governmental or private organizations: 1) their function is to represent people acting on their own volition, rather than by institutional fiat; 2) they are formal organizations, rather than ad hoc entities; 3) they aspire to be self-governing on the basis of their own

constitutional arrangements; 4) they are private in that they are separate from governments, but they are not in the business of making or distributing profit; and 5) they operate at various levels with differing goals, operations and connections (p. 20)[2]. While these characteristics are helpful in distinguishing NGOs from other organizations, they do not provide a fine-tuned differentiation between international NGOs (INGOs), national NGOs, and CBOs.

Farrington, Bebbington, Wellard and Lewis (1993) make a finer distinction of NGOs based on six dimensions: location, scale, ownership, orientation, approach and operations. Of particular importance to the discussion in this paper are the dimensions of scale, ownership and approach. Scale is regarded as a continuum of "service to grassroots/supra-community" to "grassroots/community" and ownership is a continuum of "non-membership support" to "membership support". These distinctions are similar to ones made by Gibbs et al. (1999) in which they state that international and national NGOs' purposes are to represent or assist others (the supra-community), while CBOs exist to serve the community members, the grassroots and membership supported community. Finally, the approach dimension is conceived of as "enlightened top-down", "participatory -- perfunctory and functional", and "participatory -- comprehensive and empowering" (Farrington et al., 1993, p. 4). If we delineate NGOs along these dimensions, we recognize that the literature uses quite different meanings for the same term.

Carroll (1992) distinguishes various types of NGOs, particularly the indigenous intermediary NGOs, or what he also terms "grassroots support organizations" (GSOs) from primary grassroots organizations or CBOs; he defines an intermediary NGO as an organization

> . . .that provides services [and] allied support to local groups of disadvantaged rural or urban households and individuals. In its capacity as an intermediary institution, a GSO forges links between the beneficiaries and the often remote levels of government, donor, and financial institutions" (Carroll, 1992, p. 11).

In contrast, a CBO is considered a primary grassroots organization, which is "the smallest aggregation of individuals or households that regularly engage in some joint development activity as an expression of collective interest" (Carroll, 1992, p. 11). For example, the Aga Khan Education Services within Pakistan or Kenya is an indigenous intermediary NGO because it creates a link between its international NGO counterpart, donor agencies and the communities, and it provides to the local communities services and support of which they may not have immediate access[3].

Brief definitions of community-based schools are in order to understand various forms that may or may not involve NGO partnerships. Community-based school is a term that has been used for a number of different projects and initiatives, all with diverse meaning and scope of community involvement. For example, the term "community-based schools" can be used to describe: 1) government schools with parent or community groups (i.e., PTAs) that share in some of the control or decision-making, 2) schools (public or private, formal or non-formal) that minimally involve parents in school activities, such as the community-school integration approach, or 3) schools that are partnerships between the communities and private organizations, such as in the Girls Fellowship Project (See Rugh and Bossert, 1998 for various examples of community-based schools). In this paper, "community-based school" refers to the establishment and operations of schools formed out of a partnership between community-based organizations and NGOs.

Finally, the concept of partnership is central to this paper and to the framework of opportunities and obstacles that NGOs and CBOs may face. Partnership is an elusive term that includes possibly both participation and involvement, depending on how these terms are defined;

nevertheless, partnership is not synonymous with participation or involvement (Bray, in press; Shaeffer, 1994). Partnerships generally refer to a formal understanding or agreement that requires a strong form of participation. Two different models of participation and involvement might illuminate how these terms are similar to and influence the nature of partnerships. Shaeffer (1994) developed a seven-tier model on the nature of participation in education, based on Arnstein's "ladder of participation". These levels include:

1. The mere use of a service such as a school.
2. Involvement through attendance and the receipt of information, implying passive acceptance;
3. Involvement through the contribution of resources, materials, and labor;
4. Involvement through consultation on particular issues;
5. Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;
6. Participation as implementers of delegated powers; and
7. Participation in real decision-making at every stage -- problem-identification, feasibility-study, planning, implementation, and evaluation (p. 16).

It is quite possible for an NGO or a CBO, throughout the lifetime of its partnership and depending on its goals, to operate at various levels of Shaeffer's model.

Rugh and Bossert (1998), who adapted Barnett's model, developed another variation of describing how communities participate in partnerships; the various modes of participation are:

1. The "tell" mode gives information or direction;
2. The "sell" mode gives information and expects agreement;
3. The "test" mode knows the right direction but wants to see if anything is missing;
4. The "consult" mode is not sure and wants ideas about the solution;
5. The "join" mode delegates tasks or forges partnerships to solve problems
6. The "empower" or "enable" mode gives communities skills and the permission to support the innovation; and
7. The "embolden" mode encourages the community to take its own initiatives in support of the program (p. 142).

Again, these modes are not mutually exclusive and a partnership may operate at various modes in achieving its goals. For the purposes of this paper, I consider partnerships as a formal

understanding in which two groups of people or organizations participate together in solving problems related to a common goal (e.g., mode 5); partners also share responsibility and tasks. At the same time, the nature of most NGOs and CBOs is such that NGOs often have access to certain resources and knowledge that the CBOs do not have. In this respect, the NGO has a responsibility to empower (e.g., mode 6) the CBO by providing skills and knowledge so they can operate effectively in this partnership. This is the essential role of capacity-building, a frequently neglected aspect of these partnerships (Gibbs et al., 1999).

A framework of tensions in creating effective NGO partnerships

There has generally been the perception that partnerships involving NGOs produce positive outcomes in development work. While much of the literature suggests the many possibilities and opportunities created by NGO partnerships for effective development projects (e.g., Gibbs et al., 1999; Rugh and Bossert, 1998, and UNICEF, 1999), other scholars, such as Bowden (1997), Edwards and Hulme (1992), and Streeten (1997) are less optimistic and address the obstacles that such partnership would need to overcome[4]. The following framework suggests the most prominent opportunities and obstacles facing NGO partnerships using several illustrative examples from education projects. As defined above, the examples used in this paper examine partnership between an intermediary (or national) NGO, even though they may be connected with international NGOs, and a local community.

Opportunities presented by NGO partnerships

The most frequently discussed opportunities presented by NGO partnerships include: 1) increased and appropriate participation, 2) expanded resources and impact, and 3) increased

effectiveness, and efficiency. Evidence of such possibilities and questions that remain are discussed in the following sections.

Increased and appropriate participation

One of the primary reasons that funding agencies, such as USAID, have considered channeling more money through NGOs is because they believe that NGOs are successful in involving the participation of local people in development projects, and thus, their argument follows, such projects are more effective and have more positive outcomes (Bowden, 1997; Carroll, 1992). There is considerable evidence (e.g., Rugh and Bossert, 1998) that suggests partnerships increase participation, such as more involvement by parents in the education of their children, and that this increased participation is effective in achieving the projects' educational goals, such as improving student achievement[5]. Nevertheless, the evidence on this issue is not conclusive, and other literature (e.g., Streeten, 1997) asserts that participation may be regarded as an ideal attribute of NGO partnerships. As such, achieving an optimal level and type of participation is an obstacle that must be addressed by NGOs and communities; this obstacle is discussed below in the section on lack of impact and effectiveness.

Most crucial to enhancing and creating appropriate community participation in school partnerships is the manner in which communities are involved and the purposes for which they participate. Rugh and Bossert (1998) analyze six different community school partnership initiatives in different countries, such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Balochistan Community Support Program (CSP), and conclude that a positive impact of community involvement depends on how, to what extent, and for what purposes the communities are involved. The extent of involvement varies widely across NGO and community

partnerships. Nevertheless, evaluations of NGO-community partnerships conclude that frequent and sustained participation is essential for communities to affect the school process and outcomes (e.g., Anderson and Nderitu, 1999; Khullar and Menon, 1996). In addition to the extent of involvement, the purposes of participation are also crucial.

Rugh and Bossert (1998) conclude that the purposes of community participation could generally be divided into two categories: 1) support that relates to increasing educational participation or access, such as construction or funds; and 2) support that relates to program quality, such as management or monitoring. It appears that most initiatives tend to focus on the former and in doing so, have found that parents and communities are more willing to contribute financially to their children's education than is often assumed (World Bank, 1996; Khullar & Menon, 1996). In the case where the purpose is to improve program quality, such as the CSP initiative in Balochistan, Rugh and Bossert (1998) conclude that parental monitoring and management impact both the quality of the teacher performance and student attendance and performance. Thus, participation for the purpose of improving the quality of education should be taken seriously by more community-based school partnerships.

Related to the purposes of involvement is what Gibbs et al. (1999) terms the utilization of community capacities in areas that are most appropriate. For example, if the community has the skills and resources to build a school, then they should apply their capacities to that task, but if they do not have the capacity to train teachers, then the partner, or another organization, should be identified to carry out that task. Again, the CSP initiative is a good illustration of how the capacities have been closely aligned with the extent and purposes of participation. The IPP Sindh project provides yet another example. In some cases, potential capacities or skills may be untapped, or they may only need to be identified and developed; thus participation can be

constrained by an obstacle, a mismatch of capacities and skills.

As Shaeffer (1994) concludes from his review of a number of educational partnership initiatives that there is considerable evidence that participation can aid in creating effective partnerships and in achieving the goals of the project. Shaeffer states that increased and appropriate participation can result in more access to education, additional resources and financing, improved school management, and greater student achievement. Additionally, participation in such educational development projects may have unintended, and often unstudied, effects of creating opportunities for the development of a civil and/or democratic society, and for social change (Gutmann, 1988; Reimers, 1993).

Expanded resources and impact

Bray (in press), Edwards and Hulme (1992), and Gibbs et al. (1999) submit that partnerships provide greater access to resources, such as physical and monetary resources, than is possible if the NGO acted alone. In additional to expanded monetary resources, partnerships may tap into more knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, sharing of knowledge across broader areas, from the international, to the national and local levels, and vice versa, increases the potential impact on the communities and the NGOs involved. Access to more resources and a broader impact also bring with them possibilities for and issues of effectiveness in implementation, an element addressed in the next section.

The expansion of resources is most visible in financial terms. For instance, both the Balochistan CSP project and the Mombasa initiative have secured greater financial resources through parent and community contributions (Anderson & Nderitu, 1999l; World Bank, 1996).

Similarly, greater availability of resources such as teachers, schools, and land are possible through partnerships, as the CSP project and the IPP, Sindh project demonstrate.

With regard to increased knowledge and expertise, the IPP project demonstrates how problem solving and innovations become possible because of the skills and knowledge at the local level. For example, finding alternative funding options in the poorest communities may not be feasible without the involvement of the community members who can generate fundraising and scholarships from within the community. The Fe y Alegria initiative has also been commended for its communication of knowledge and lessons learned across a network of local, national and international groups. Additionally, by working closely with local communities, the Fe y Alegria partnership has encouraged unique innovations that are useful to the communities, such as creating school gardens or workshops on family and parenting problems (Reimers in Rugh and Bossert, 1998).

Finally, impact might be considered in a variety ways, such as achievement of project goals or the improvement of performance. The CSP project is one illustration of greater impact on performance. For example, because parents are involved in the schools and pressure the teachers to be present and active, a study concluded that CSP schools were open more frequently and productive teaching occurred, thus affecting student achievement (Thomas in Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Impact can also be measured by the ability to scale-up innovations or to transfer ideas and techniques (Carroll, 1992). The BRAC project and Fe y Alegria are outstanding examples of how ideas, once piloted and revised, can be transferred to multiple communities given that an infrastructure is in place and that the communities are relatively similar in certain aspects. For instance, BRAC, over the course of its existence and through refining its process, has expanded to include more than 34,000 schools enrolling 1,100,000 students (Rugh and

Bossert, 1998). This initiative now educates a large number of students who were not being served in any way by the traditional government school system.

Increased effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness of NGOs in partnerships with communities is most often considered in two ways: 1) the ability to provide necessary services that are better than what was previously available, and 2) the ability for these services to act as a foundation for future development (Carroll, 1992). NGOs have generally been regarded as more effective in development projects because they often involve local people who understand the issues and know the resources. Additionally, NGOs usually work in a specific area of development, such as education, and thus have experience in and "blueprints" of effective development methods. At the same time, NGOs are regarded as extremely flexible in working with local concerns so they can adapt these blueprints and make projects effective at the local level. For example, the Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan has worked in education projects across Pakistan for many years and has accumulated considerable expertise and blueprints ideas of what works in various local settings.

Efficiency is generally regarded as the relationship between effectiveness and cost, such that increased efficiency could be considered better service at an equal or lower cost than what is being provided by an alternative source (Chapman, 1998; Windham & Chapman, 1990). One main reason that NGOs are revered as more efficient is that they generally employ their staff or the communities' local staff at lower salaries while attempting to maintain a standard of performance equivalent to other organizations. Additionally, they utilize past experience and blueprint ideas from high quality projects, thus lowering costs in designing new programs. Another factor that figures into their possible efficiency is they have less overhead and

administrative bureaucracy than a government system may have (Chen, 1997). Yet, this perceived notion of NGOs as a bastion of efficiency is being questioned as NGOs grow in organizational size and reach, therefore creating more costs and introducing new mechanism of administration and management that may be unfamiliar to traditional NGOs (Streeten, 1997).

Several NGO and community partnerships illustrate the first criteria of effectiveness. The Balochistan CSP project is considered highly effective in providing access to education for girls in an area where only 15 percent of the girls were attending school, and now nearly 70 to 80 percent are enrolled in CSP project schools (Rugh and Bossert, 1998; Heward, 1999). The BRAC project has also been regarded as highly effective in providing educational services where schools were previously non-existent or ineffective. The BRAC project also serves as a foundation for involving community members in other development projects, such as adult literacy and health care. The IPP Sindh project is an example of effectiveness in achieving its goals of educating girls, where their enrollment rates have been previously very low.

While the BRAC and CSP projects may be deemed effective given the two above stated criteria, measurements of improved efficiency are not definitely conclusive. For example, the BRAC project's greatest challenge is cost, given that it finances 100 percent of the education initiatives without government or parental contributions (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). One concern is that the cost of educating a single child, or of running a single school has increased each year of its operation. Yet, overall, the costs per child are nearly equivalent to the costs per child in the government system. This maintenance of costs is achieved, however, because of lower teacher salaries, which often brings with it less-educated teachers, a concern for its impact on student achievement.

The efficiency of many of these partnership projects has not been fully studied. However, one of the concerns that seems to receive the most visible attention by NGOs and communities is keeping the cost to parents lower than or nearly equivalent to their cost of educating a child in the conventional schools. While this has been the case in the CSP example, this reduction in cost is only a partial picture of a project's efficiency, as the NGOs often incur extensive expenditures in set-up, management and oversight.

Obstacles faced by NGO partnerships

Many of the potential obstacles faced by NGO partnerships are intricately related to the opportunities, e.g., enhanced participation, and how they are conceived of and effectively implemented. The primary obstacles discussed in the following sections include: 1) a mismatch or lack of skills and capacities, 2) a lack of impact and effectiveness, related to ineffective participation, 3) a creation of dependence on NGOs and external funding, and 4) difficulty in replicability and sustainability.

Mismatch or lack of skills and capacity

Gibbs et al. (1999) conclude in their review of NGO partnerships that a mismatch or lack of skills and capacities of one or both partners is a primary reason for failure of the project and partnership. With an increasing number of new intermediary NGOs, it is inevitable that many of them may lack sufficient knowledge and skills to manage effective projects. Likewise, as existing NGOs expand, they encounter difficulties in meeting increasing demands with available staff skills and knowledge (Billis and McKeith, 1992). Additionally, many communities or CBOs, for a variety of reasons, may lack necessary skills to contribute to certain aspects of the

partnership, such as management or oversight of the schools. If the NGO fails to recognize the CBO's need to develop capacity or if the NGO lacks the experience to develop the necessary skills in CBO members, the partnership may not reach fruition.

Such mismatches of skills and capacities are difficult to find in published literature, yet, examples of a lack of capacities may be uncovered in the early stages of some now more successful projects. While the Harambee initiative in Kenya is not an NGO-community partnership per se, certain aspects of its community involvement demonstrate this obstacle. This initiative has been regarded as highly effective in terms of community mobilization, nevertheless, it has been much less effective in creating and using the necessary skills to achieve its educational goals. For example, one of the major failures that Rugh and Bossert (1998) summarize is that these schools often had poor management and supervision and overall low quality. Bray (1988) suggests that some reasons for these difficulties are that the communities lacked the skills to plan realistically, and they had inadequate expertise in large-scale construction and capital investment.

Similarly, the Aga Khan Foundation partnership with communities in Rajasthan, India, the Bodh Initiative, recognizes the need for greater capacity building particularly in the areas of organizational management of the schools so that the initiative is less dependent on one or two leaders (Khullar and Menon, 1996). The identification of these needed skills in earlier stages of the partnership may help the Bodh project to effectively change those elements that could contribute to its demise. It seems the case that capacity building of necessary skills and knowledge is often the most needed and least attended to element of partnerships, but when it is recognized as primary issue, the development of capacity can help overcome this obstacle that

leads to project failure. The IPP Sindh project provides another example of how initiatives have been taken to overcome this obstacle.

Lack of impact and effectiveness

While greater impact, in terms of scope or reach, and effectiveness have been hailed as principle opportunities presented by NGO partnerships, their negative sides also present obstacles to partnerships. The most common obstacle related to both impact and effectiveness is the failure of NGO partnerships to affect the poorest of the poor communities. Streeten (1997) argues that NGO initiatives can often reinforce particular groups of elites in the communities. Additionally because NGOs are driven by a particular mission, ideology, and desire to achieve their goals, they may often overlook the most difficult situations (unless this is their mission), such as racially and socially conflicted areas.

Many of the NGO-community partnerships in education do not report data on the impact differences among families (e.g., such as their or their children's involvement in the school) within these poor communities. It is often assumed, as in the CSP initiative, that members in a community are equally poor and little attention is given to variations of income level. Nevertheless, concerns raised by such projects as IMPACT in the Philippines suggest that there is often an emphasis on the role and participation of "influentials" in the community. Rather, consideration needs to be given as to how to include a larger group of parents and communities members who may not be involved because they are illiterate and unable to contribute in the same manner as literate parents (Rugh and Bossert, 1998).

As participation is a key element affecting partnership effectiveness and impact, so is a lack of appropriate involvement an intertwined issue with ineffectiveness. Gibbs et al. (1999)

suggests that many NGO partnerships are not effective precisely because they fail to inculcate an appropriate level of involvement. While Shaeffer (1994) concludes that participation can lead to achievement of project outcomes, he also suggests that generating participation in educational development projects is no simple task. Effective participation requires experience, processes, and attitudes that enable the involvement of people in policies and ideas from which they have often been previously excluded. Participation must also change and overcome political cultures and established administrative processes. In many cases, partners are not aware of such issues affecting participation and do not purposefully aim to develop effective processes. Additionally, communities are regarded as lacking the capacities to contribute to such tasks as policies or management. Given these obstacles to participation along with the effects of poverty and illiteracy, it is very probable that the poorest members of these communities are not involved.

In the case of BRAC, the extent of community involvement is mediated by two contradictory goals: a commitment to involvement as a means of fostering comprehensive rural development, and limited funding which involves cost-effectiveness practices (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Some studies (e.g., Boeren, Latif, and Stromquist in Rugh and Bossert, 1998) have suggested that the communities are not involved to the extent fully possible, given the funding structure. Additionally, data are not reported regarding sub-sections of the communities that arenot involved in this project. Processes and attitudes that aim to overcome established administrative procedures and that build needed capacities should be inculcated so that greater participation can occur.

Creation of dependence on NGOs and external funding

While the overcoming of dependence on external donor agencies, i.e., World Bank, has been regarded as a positive effect of NGO involvement in educational services, the possibilities for a mirror relationship to occur between local communities and intermediary or international NGOs is now being discussed as a real concern. As Stirrat and Henkel (1997) argue, NGOs, which once were dependent on private donations, are currently seek extraordinary amounts of funding from government and international donor agencies. As such, NGOs now play an intermediary role between the donors and the local communities, but they do not lessen the possibilities for dependence on such funding, unless other local or private methods of funding are created.

Both the Fe y Alegria initiatives and the BRAC project have encountered difficulties in obtaining sufficient funding sources to achieve the project goals (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Additionally, conclusions from studies of these programs are that the communities rely heavily, if not totally, on the financial support of the NGOs who obtain external funding to maintain the schools. It can be argued in these cases that at least the NGOs are effective as there have been numerous positive outcomes. Nevertheless, the funding continues to come primarily from donor agencies. This potential dependence on NGOs evokes yet another concern: that NGOs, while filling a necessary gap in providing education services, may be allowing governments to abdicate their responsibility in providing basic education. This may be particularly the case if NGOs do not have a policy agenda that aims to alter the government's lack of initiative.

Difficulty in replicability and sustainability

Finally, one of the main obstacles facing NGO and community partnership initiatives is the possibility to sustain and replicate them. Because community-based schools must account for local conditions, interest and participation, the possibility to reproduce similar outcomes in a different environment is often unknown and uncertain. Additionally, these projects often rely heavily on external funding, as noted above, and on considerable support and experience of the NGO, thus, creating difficulty in sustaining the initiatives indefinitely. The BRAC initiative is one anomaly in its ability to sustain and replicate its efforts, but the cost, both in terms of financial and human resources, has been considerable. In this case, the NGO has a long-term commitment to the partnership, which may not be always possible in other situations. The IPP Sindh project is another alternative example of how sustainability is being address, though its success is not yet known.

Intertwined with sustainability is the issue of replicability or scaling-up of a project. The Escuelas Nuevas initiative, while often regarded as highly successful, has been critiqued for its failure to be replicable in other communities (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). Additionally, there is concern for its sustainability as sources of funding are often precarious and inconsistent. Two other main factors that Rugh and Bossert (1998) summarize as affecting its sustainability and replicability are: 1) the necessity for training departments that are willing and capable of retraining teachers in the Escuela Nueva methodology, and 2) the macro-level conditions within Colombia that must be mitigated in order to seek support for replication and scaling-up of the initiative. In essence, greater impact on the policy environment and on macro-level systems, i.e., teacher training institutions, must occur in order for community projects to become sustainable and replicable (Edwards and Hulme, 1992).

Implications for effective NGO-community partnerships

The above framework of opportunities and obstacles within NGO partnerships suggests several implications for achieving effective partnerships, and thus success in project goals. The first implication is that the relationship between the NGO and the communities (or CBOs) must be cultivated in such a way as to seek maximum participation as defined by either the Shaeffer (1994) or the Rugh and Bossert (1998) model. Furthermore, the relationship must be based on the capacities and skills that each partner brings to the project. Finally, the relationship must allow for capacity building to occur, both for the communities and the NGOs, so that effective skills and knowledge can be enhanced and adapted to the changing needs of the project over its lifetime.

In addition to the skills that may be identified by the NGO, such as the need for management training, a worthwhile capacity that should be developed in both NGOs and communities is the knowledge and capacity to collect and analyze data, and then to use the data for continual assessment of the project. One of the issues that arises in partnerships is the shifting of goals from the initial involvement of communities and the development of schools, to the sustaining of the schools and the providing of additional educational services. Progress toward these shifting and new goals can be best understood if members of the partnerships can develop a plan by which they can assess what it is they do and how they accomplish the daily activities towards achieving these goals. Assessing one's practices and identifying areas for continual improvement and capacity building will help in determining the effectiveness and in ensuring the sustainability of the project. Capacity building of this nature is one of the most overlooked, yet necessary, elements of partnerships.

A third implication is that such partnerships must attend to all facets of the project in accomplishing overall effectiveness. Often more emphasis is given to the involvement or empowerment of the community rather than the achievement of educational goals, such as quality of teaching, student achievement or student participation. An effective partnership project develops a systemic approach and has the capacity to (or develops it) enable the achievement of multiple goals and objectives. Such a systemic approach must also consider the long-term goals of sustainability and broader impact. In order to achieve a long-term and broader impact, as Edwards and Hulme (1992) suggest, these partnerships must consider how to seek a greater variety of financial support, such as creating multiple partnerships with local and national organizations, including government. In addition, partnerships should conceive of ways that their initiatives and goals can impact local and national educational policies.

Finally, there is a need for evaluations and research on such NGO initiatives to assess and report on the aspects of partnership effectiveness in addition to the methods of participation and the factors that affect achievement of project goals. At the same time, the reporting of lessons learned should expand upon the obstacles faced in such partnerships. Such research could challenge or verify this framework, as well as present informative lessons as to how the opportunities of NGO partnerships are being further enhanced and the obstacles are being mitigated.

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Endnotes

[1] NGOs in developing countries are often referred to as those in the South, or intermediary NGOs, as distinguished from NGOs in the North that are often donor NGOs. See Carroll, 1992 for more on this distinction.
[2] See Chen (1997) for another set of defining characteristics of NGOs.
[3] In the case of Aga Khan Foundation, a complex partnership is in place in which CBOs are in partnership with NGOs, at the same time that the NGO is part of an international NGO network and is funded by various international donor agencies.
[4] This framework is not drawn from a comprehensive review of the literature on all NGO projects, but rather it concentrates on literature of educational projects and meta-analyses of NGO partnerships. For additional references and a good literature review of the opportunities and difficulties facing intermediary NGOs, see Carroll, 1992.
[5] Parental participation in schools and in a child's education is regarded as a primary indicator of improved achievement. See OECD, 1995 and Shaeffer, 1994 for more on participation as an indicator that affects the quality of education.